

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend the claims as indicated:

1 1. (Currently amended) A data collection and reporting method comprising, in a
2 central computer system,
3 automatically, that is, independent of any required human intervention: i)
4 receiving over a transmission channel an electronic representation of an image of a
5 physical form that embodies a report concerning at least one parameter from at least
6 one sender, the form having a plurality of data fields, each corresponding to an indicator
7 of at least a partial value of at least one of the parameters; ii) identifying the location of
8 the data fields in the received representation of the image of the form; and iii) both
9 extracting report data from the report and storing the extracted report data in a
10 predetermined common format in a memory for subsequent processing;
11 for at least one third party, storing a set of party-specific rules in the memory;
12 associating the received report with the corresponding third party; and
13 associating at least one fourth party with the sender and with at least one of the
14 third parties; and
15 in which:
16 the third party is an agency that communicates with the central computer
17 system using an agency computer system;
18 the fourth party is a client of the agency and communicates with the
19 central computer system using a client computer system, the agency and client being
20 contractually related entities;
21 the sender is a person referred by the agency to the client and performs
22 work tasks for the client;
23 the at least one parameter includes time worked by the sender on behalf
24 of the client; and
25 further comprising, within the central computer system:
26 via a publicly accessible transmission network, receiving access requests
27 from the agency and the client sent through their respective computer systems for
28 portions of the extracted report data defined according to the respective party-specific

29 rules, and responding to the access requests by returning the requested report data to
30 the agency and client, respectively, including automatically, that is, independent of any
31 required human intervention, completing any requests for interactive and iterative
32 review, modification or annotation, inclusive, of the report data by the agency and client
33 according to each party's respective party-specific rules[[;]], whereby the central
34 computer system is an intermediary system between the sender on the one hand and
35 the agency and client on the other hand and exposes different interfaces to the sender,
36 agency and client;

37 converting the extracted report data into a format specified by the rules
38 associated with that third party, whereby third parties operating different hardware
39 platforms and processing software may receive and process extracted report data from
40 the same memory within the central computer system; and
41 transferring a copy of the extracted report data to the third party via the
42 network, whereby the transferred data resides at and is available for processing by the
43 third party.

2. canceled

1 3. (Currently amended) A method as in claim 2_1, further comprising the
2 following steps:

3 storing the extracted report data in the memory in a predetermined common
4 format;

5 before transferring the extracted report data to any third party, converting the
6 extracted data into a format specified by the rules associated with that third party,
7 whereby third parties operating different hardware platforms and processing software
8 may receive and process extracted report data from the same memory within the central
9 computer system.

1 4. (Original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising the step of storing in the
2 memory third-party indicated annotations associated with the extracted report data.

1 5. (Original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising the following steps:
2 receiving, from the third party, a confirmation or rejection indication relating to at
3 least a portion of the extracted, stored report data; and
4 upon receipt of the rejection indication, directing the sender to resubmit a
5 corrected report.

1 6. (Original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising the following steps:
2 storing an image of the report as received; and
3 via the network, allowing access by the third party to the image, whereby the
4 third party is able to confirm the accuracy of the extracted report data.

7-18. (Cancelled)